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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 582 - JUNE 9, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

WARNING NOTICE SENSITIVE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED NOT
RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS--NOT RELEASABLE TO
CONTRACTORS OR CONTRACTOR/CONSULTANTS

1. LEBANON. SEVERAL REPORTS INDICATE THAT RIVALRIES
BETWEEN VARIOUS CHRISTIAN FACTIONS ARE INCREASING. TEN-
SIONS IN NORTH LEBANON ARE RUNNING VERY HIGH FOLLOWING
THE ASSASSINATION OF A LEADING PHALANGIST BY SUPPORTERS OF
FORMER PRESIDENT FRANJIYAH.

2. MEANWHILE, EMBASSY BEIRUT REPORTS THAT, ACCORDING TO
ADF COMMANDER KHATIB, THE SYRIANS WILL NOT CLOSE THE GAP
BETWEEN THEIR SOUTHERNMOST OUTPOSTS AND UNIFIL CONTINGENTS
IN SOUTH LEBANON. THEY WILL EXERT PRESSURE ON THE PALES-
TINIANS, HOWEVER, SO THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY CAN MOVE SOUTH.
THE CURRENT PLAN IS FOR THE FIRST CONTINGENT OF 1,500 MEN

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TO MOVE SOUTH THROUGH THE BEKAA TO MARJAYOUN AND TO FAN
OUT FROM THERE. THE MOVE MIGHT BEGIN AS EARLY AS JUNE 11.

3. IN THE POLITICAL ARENA, THE LEBANESE FRONT, WITHOUT
FRANJIYAH, ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE ON JUNE 6 WHICH THE
SHAMOUNISTS HAILED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT STATEMENT IN OVER
A YEAR. THE COMMUNIQUE:

(A) DECLARED ALL AGREEMENTS WITH THE PALESTINIANS AS
NULL AND VOID;

(B) DEMANDED A PROMPT END TO THE ARMED PALESTINIAN
PRESENCE IN LEBANON; AND

(C) SAID THAT WHEN THE LEBANESE ARMY DEPLOYS SOUTHWARD,
IT MUST USE THE COASTAL HIGHWAY THROUGH DAMOUR.
(CONFIDENTIAL)

4. JORDAN-PLO. BOTH JORDAN AND THE PLO HAVE EVIDENCED
SOME INTEREST AGAIN IN RESUMING A DIALOGUE. DESPITE THE
LIKELIHOOD THAT THIS EFFORT WILL PROVE AS INCONCLUSIVE AS
ITS PREDECESSORS, EACH SIDE SEEMS WILLING TO TAKE A

CALCULATED RISK AND EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR COM-PROMISE. ARAFAT PROBABLY BELIEVES THAT THE DIALOGUE WOULD REDUCE JORDANIAN-PLO TENSIONS AND MIGHT GIVE THE PLO A ROLE IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. HE IS APPEALING TO THE COMMON JORDANIAN AND PLO INTEREST IN ENDING ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. HUSSEIN APPARENTLY VIEWS ARAFAT'S APPEAL AS A PARTIAL VINDICATION OF HIS PREVIOUS ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH A FRAMEWORK IN SUPPORT OF JORDANIAN AND PALESTINIAN GOALS.

5. IN A BROADER CONTEXT, HUSSEIN AND ARAFAT PROBABLY HAVE OTHER GOALS. ARAFAT AND HIS PLO ALLIES HAVE BELIEVED FOR SOME TIME THAT CLOSER RELATIONS WITH JORDAN COULD SERVE THE PLO'S INTEREST BY:

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(A) CONVINCING JORDAN ONCE AGAIN TO ALLOW ITS TERRITORY TO BE USED AS A BASE FOR FEDAYEEN OPERATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL;

(B) EXPANDING THROUGH JORDAN THE PLO'S ACCESS TO THE WEST BANK, WHERE PLO LEADERS WISH TO INCREASE THEIR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND INFLUENCE, AND FACILITATING THE FLOW OF PLO FUNDS TO ENHANCE ITS SUPPORT AMONG WEST BANKERS;

(C) GIVING PLO LEADERS ANOTHER CARD TO USE IN THEIR GAME OF PLAYING OFF ONE ARAB STATE AGAINST ANOTHER.

6. FOR JORDAN, TIES WITH THE PLO SAID:

(A) GIVE JORDAN BROADER SCOPE IN NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE WEST BANK (NOW THEORETICALLY LEFT TO THE PLO AS A RESULT OF THE RABAT DECISION);

(B) REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE WEST BANK "ENTITY" COULD THREATEN THE HASHEMITE REGIME;

(C) HELP REASSURE THE JORDANIANS THAT THE "PALESTINIAN HOMELAND" IS NOT ESTABLISHED ON THE EAST BANK WHICH MANY EAST BANKERS FEAR WILL BE THE RESULT OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

7. IT IS PROBLEMATIC, HOWEVER, WHETHER ANY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS WILL ARISE FROM JORDANIAN-PLO TALKS. LONG-STANDING MUTUAL DISTRUST AND HATRED AND TACIT COMPETITION FOR INFLUENCE ON THE WEST BANK WOULD SEEM TO MILITATE AGAINST A RECONCILIATION. IN THIS RESPECT, THE ISRAELIS

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WOULD RESIST ANY NEGOTIATIONS WITH JORDAN IF THEY PERCEIVED THAT HUSSEIN, IN EFFECT, WAS ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE PLO. (SECRET)

8. MOROCCO. MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA HAVE LAUNCHED A MAJOR DRIVE AGAINST A POLISARIO BASE CAMP IN WESTERN SAHARA. SOME 4,000 TROOPS ARE SAID TO BE INVOLVED. THEY WILL BE BACKED BY AIRCRAFT FROM BOTH COUNTRIES AND, IF NEEDED, FRENCH AIRCRAFT FLYING FROM DAKAR, SENEGAL. THE OPERATION IS FOCUSING ON POLISARIO ENCAMPMENTS AND SUPPLY CACHES IN THE MOUNTAINS NEAR OUM DREIGA IN THE MOROCCAN-CLAIMED PART OF WESTERN SAHARA. ABOUT 1,200 POLISARIO GUERRILLAS ARE IN THE AREA.

9. MOROCCO HAS RECEIVED THE FIRST SIX OF 50 MIRAGE F-1 FIGHTER AIRCRAFT ON ORDER FROM FRANCE, ACCORDING TO DEFENSE ATTACHE IN RABAT. THE MOROCCAN AIR FORCE, HOWEVER, IS SHORT OF QUALIFIED PILOTS, AND IT WILL REMAIN AT A DISADVANTAGE AGAINST ITS MUCH LARGER ALGERIAN ADVERSARY.

10. THE F-1S, ORDERED IN 1976 FOR \$600 MILLION, ARE THE MAJOR FEATURE OF THE AIR FORCE'S MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. OTHER MODERNIZATION STEPS INCLUDE THE ACQUISITION OF WESTERN SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES, AN AIR DEFENSE RADAR SYSTEM, ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTS, TRAINERS, AND HELICOPTERS, AS WELL AS PLANS NEARLY TO DOUBLE THE AIR FORCE'S SIZE OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

11. THE DELIVERY SCHEDULE FOR THE F-1S SLIPPED SEVERAL TIMES BECAUSE OF CONSTRUCTION DELAYS AT THE AIRFIELD WHERE THEY WILL BE BASED AND A SHORTAGE OF MOROCCAN PILOTS QUALIFIED FOR TRAINING ON THE AIRCRAFT. WORK AT THE BASE APPARENTLY IS STILL NOT COMPLETE, AND THE FIGHTERS WILL BE STATIONED TEMPORARILY AT ANOTHER FIELD.

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12. PILOT SHORTAGES LOOM AS A LARGER AND LONGER LASTING PROBLEM FOR THE MOROCCANS. THE FRENCH REPORTEDLY HAD DIFFICULTY SELECTING SIX QUALIFIED TRAINEES FROM AMONG MOROCCO'S MOST CAPABLE FIGHTER PILOTS. THE F-1 PROGRAM, MOREOVER, IS DRAWING FROM THE POOL OF PILOTS TRAINED IN THE US-BUILT F-5--CURRENTLY MOROCCO'S FRONTLINE FIGHTER--WHICH WILL CONTINUE IN SERVICE AFTER F-1 DELIVERIES ARE

COMPLETED. THIS WILL OFFSET RECENT GAINS THE AIR FORCE
HAS MADE IN ITS F-5 PILOT-TO-AIRCRAFT RATIO. EMBASSY
RABAT ESTIMATES THAT MOROCCO IS UNLIKELY TO HAVE A FULLY
OPERATIONAL F-1 SQUADRON UNTIL NEXT YEAR, ALTHOUGH SOME
AIRCRAFT COULD BE PRESSED INTO SERVICE SOONER IF NECESSARY.
(SECRET/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT) VANCE

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